

**Intro by: Marilee Woodrow**

Good evening and a warm welcome to everyone, thank you for coming out tonight.

Each year brings new hope and a renewed sense of excitement that Springfield is the very best place to live, work, and call home. This year I begin a full four-year term as mayor. I begin it with a feeling of gratitude and pride in who we are and with eagerness to begin the next chapter.

This past year I found myself being constantly encouraged by the people of this community. We have the right attitude, and I see this positive approach evident throughout the city. From new businesses and expanding businesses to people on the street who stop me and say they ‘trust in who we are and what we are doing. We are optimistically moving forward and this progress will only continue.

In 2013 the State of City of Springfield is **inspired**. I have been inspired by the people of Springfield, Oregon, and this year I want us to continue to inspire each other to accomplish even more.

There are so many examples of people in this community that step up and stand out for the work they do and the example they set.

They probably would not consider themselves inspirational, but simply doing what needs to be done.

Tonight, we are going to get a chance to take a look at just some of our inspirational Springfield people and their stories – some stories may be familiar, and some will be brand new.

So where better to start than with a look at two Springfield residents that inspired an international community to come together. Let’s meet Rudwon and Nancy Dawod.

*(Rudwan video 3m30sec)*

Thank you Rudwon, Nancy and baby Nylie for calling Springfield home, and for sharing your remarkable story with us.

As always there are many thank yous to talk about, but this year I'm saving the rest of them for a little later.

First, let's take a look at our successes. Looking back at 2012 there were plenty of successes that speak volumes about our community's ability to get things done.

## **DOWNTOWN**

You cannot talk about the successes in Springfield without focusing on downtown. Last year we saw a transition. Our plans came together and we are seeing the benefits of this work.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of, and continues to be part of the planning process. You can feel the difference now. I've heard people say there is a "buzz in the air", and that pretty much sums it up.

**So what's happened? Let's start with – Bars:** For more than 15 years community members told us in surveys, letters and in person to improve downtown by working to get rid of the seedy bars, the same bars that played a major role in our downtown's former reputation. That reputation is changing with every passing day. I'm proud to report that after a decade of work, the last of those bars along Main Street are gone!

**What's in its place? – a school:** Adding to the celebration was word that a new school, A3's **Health and Science Campus** would be filling a vacant space in that same building. The goal of this new school is to engage students' passion for science and health through a learning environment focused on inquiry, research and college coursework. Could there have been a more profound and fitting change?

**Of course we can't overlook what else is growing – Sprout and the year-round farmers' market:** What was once a "single-season" farmers' market has now become the year-round Marketplace@Sprout! Located in the beautiful and historic former First Christian Church in downtown Springfield, Sprout is bringing services to food-based businesses and consumers alike. Thank you NEDCO for your hard work on our downtown.

**What's coming very soon that should be a big draw to downtown? – Our new brew pub.** Currently under construction is a family-friendly brew-pub called Planktown – Whose goal is to be the FINEST brew pub in Lane County. The City is even working with them on a signature Springfield brew called Logger Lager.

Downtown continues to thrive with small business owners willing to bet on our future. I've had the pleasure to participate in quite a few Springfield Chamber of Commerce ribbon cuttings this past year in downtown. The businesses are varied and give downtown a personality all its own. This progress makes clear that businesses have been inspired by our community and in-turn are doing work that inspires us.

With that thought in mind, I'd like to introduce to you a downtown business that you might drive past every day, but never noticed. Yet their work has inspired designs across the country and the world. Let's meet the people at 9wood. (*9wood video*)

We thank 9Wood and the many other wood products businesses in Springfield that have been the backbone of the community; and now have created markets for specialty wood products by being innovative. They are truly an inspiration.

### **Justice Center Levy**

Also helping to change the landscape of downtown and all of Springfield is the success of our municipal jail. Our community once again showed its trust in us by approving a renewal of our Public Safety levy. The numbers speak for themselves.

- Crime has dropped more than 30% since 2008,
- Burglary's down more than 50% and
- Car theft is down by 74%.

### **Glenwood Refinement Plan**

2012 marked the achievement of an important milestone for the redevelopment of Glenwood with the adoption of phase one of the Glenwood Refinement Plan. The plan represents several years of work by partner agencies, stakeholders and the community.

The Plan for the Glenwood Riverfront promotes a mix of commercial, office, and industrial uses that will create jobs and visitor opportunities.

Picture a mixture of housing choices and businesses located along the beautiful Willamette River. There will be access to river for everyone, with connections and paths that will showcase this gem in our urban core.

### **Fire Department Merger**

The fire merger between Springfield and Eugene continued to progress in 2012 with agreements reached that provide the highest quality service at the lowest cost for both cities.

The merger brings with it a new computer system that will reduce dispatch times and ensure that the closest fire truck will always be sent to emergencies. We look forward to future savings through this partnership.

### **Healthy Living**

In 2012 the City became part of Oregon's rich history of running and road race events. In fact we held a running event that had never been held anywhere in Oregon, or in the world for that matter. On October 13, the City of Springfield partnered with 5-time 800 meter U.S. Champion, 2-time Olympian and Springfield resident Nick Symmonds for the Inaugural Nick Symmonds Springfield 800, the first ever 800 meter straight road race. Hundreds of runners made running history in Downtown Springfield. The race, officially sanctioned by the United States Association of Track and Field is set to become a yearly event in Springfield. It was a fun day! **(Play NSS800 video 1:20)**

And, just today I participated in a news conference promoting a partnership with ABC's popular program the Biggest Loser Race Walk for a 5 and 15k event.

And, Springfield is not just promoting NEW healthy activities. There is an inspiring group of seniors who have been staying active in Springfield for years. They are the Whippets Walking Group. (*Play Whippets video 1m 50sec*)

I first met the Whippets several years ago. Even then I was inspired by their energy and sense of life. They speak volumes about the benefits of living an active lifestyle, no matter what your age.

### **Health Care Innovation**

Pushing for a healthy community included more than running and walking. The City of Springfield is a top 20 finalist for the **Bloomberg Philanthropies' Mayors Challenge**, a competition created to inspire American cities to generate innovative ideas that solve major challenges – and that ultimately can be shared with other cities across the nation. Winners will be announced in spring 2013, with a total of \$9 million dollars going to five cities to jumpstart implementation of their ideas. Every US City was eligible to participate. More than 300 cities applied. Springfield is the smallest city in the final group.

Our idea is mobile health care – providing mobile health care and eliminating unnecessary and expensive trips to the ER. We'll know this spring if we will receive a grant to start this project that has the potential to change healthcare throughout the US.

### **Library Successes**

Our Library is reaching thousands of Springfield children, helping them become successful students. More than 1,500 Springfield students entered the library's bookmark contest –and nearly 1,900 children joined the library's Summer Reading Club.

### **Balanced Budget**

In the best of years budget deliberations are difficult because the needs of the citizens of Springfield exceed the resources available. Because of the economic recession, we have had to do some serious belt tightening, and find innovative approaches, which is why we continue to create balanced budgets that produce results for the citizens of Springfield.

We face a few more challenges as we begin to slowly climb out the recession, but I remain confident that with the diligence of our outstanding budget committee we can meet those challenges.

### **Invigorated Partnership with Team Springfield**

Our TEAM Springfield Partners continue to see success as well.

**Willamalane's** \$20 million bond measure passed in November, allowing the community to acquire, develop and improve parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

Construction of the Middle Fork Path from Clearwater Park to Dorris Ranch is almost complete. This 10-foot-wide fully accessible path winds for 2.5 miles from Clearwater Park to Quarry Butte.

Construction of the path from Quarry Creek to Dorris Ranch is under way and will be completed by fall 2013 – giving everyone another opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the rivers that surround Springfield.

**Springfield Schools continue to improve.** In the recently released state report cards, the Oregon Department of Education has announced that Centennial Elementary school has been named a “model school” under its new ratings formulas.

They continue to take the lead on Springfield's Martin Luther King Jr. March and Celebration, now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year. We hope to see you at the event this Monday!

And Springfield schools continued to excel at athletics. We are proud that Springfield's own Mercedes Russell, the nation's top women's college basketball recruit has chose to play with the University of Tennessee and the Thurston Girls varsity soccer team won state. We are proud of our students!

**And, our partners at SUB** continue to provide the lowest electric rates in Lane County.

### **Thank You**

With all of our successes comes the time to say thank you. Somewhere toward the end of this past year it became clear to me that we need to stop and thank the entire community of

Springfield for where we are and where we are going; that we should take the time to recognize the commitment and effort everyone puts in on a daily basis and which makes the people of this community stand out. They believe in our city, and they show it every time they get up and go to work, to school, to volunteer, to spend time with their families and friends.

So, today I want to dedicate this time to everyone in Springfield who has made this community home, a home we are all proud to call our own.

First, I want to thank my partners on the City Council. They consistently show every day their dedication to Springfield by keeping the best interests of the community at the heart of all our decisions.

It is truly an honor and a pleasure to serve with Councilors Sean VanGordan, Hillary Wylie, Sheri Moore, Dave Ralston, Marilee Woodrow, and our newest Councilor Bob Brew. Please stand and be recognized.

And, while I am recognizing the volunteers on the City Council I want to take time to thank **Joe Pishioneri**, who was councilor for ward 6 from 2004 to 2012. (*Call up for award*).

Joe you were always a true advocate for the citizens of Springfield. You studied the issues and asked great questions that helped all of us make better decisions. I will always remember it was your idea to put an exit lane from Pioneer Parkway to Q Street that saves time for me and a lot of other people every day. Thank you for your service to Springfield.

I want to thank both our state delegation and our federal partners for working so hard to ensure that the policies and projects important to our community move forward at the state and federal level. Thank you retired Representative Terry Beyer, Senator Lee Beyer, Representative Peter DeFazio, and Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley.

I want to also publicly congratulate new State Representative John Lively who has, for so many years, worked hard on behalf of Springfield. I wish you the best and look forward to working with you.

Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce for their dedication to Springfield businesses and for continuing to be a valuable partner.

Of course I want to thank the City of Springfield staff. But this year I want to say a few words about my observations from talking and working with them in 2012. Not only is there an incredibly outstanding executive team here at the City, but also there is an incredibly talented and dedicated staff throughout our City government that I have had the pleasure to meet. Whether sitting in a cubicle working with a staff person at City Hall, or talking with someone in the parking lot of a home improvement store on the weekend, I have seen firsthand why we get things done. The employees at the City are enthusiastic, creative, hardworking and just plain great people.

To everyone working for the City, thank you for helping make Springfield such a great place to call home. Please stand and be recognized.

Thank you to our partners at Lane County and the City of Eugene. Over this past year I have seen us work together better than ever. I look forward to continuing to make progress on issues that concern us all. Specifically, thank you Springfield Commissioner Leiken for your continued support of Springfield projects. And to Mayor Piercy thank you for the camaraderie that we share in common goals.

I would be completely remiss if I didn't stop and say a special heartfelt thank you to Springfield School District Superintendent Nancy Golden. Nancy has put Springfield on the map for her exceptional work on behalf of our educational system and our children. I am personally so proud to know Nancy. Thank you for your vision, your dedication and your inspiration.

**(DON'T CRY)** ☺ ☺ ☺ As always to my family, thank you for your love, your help and your understanding. I could not do it without you. I do want to make special mention my new grandson, Liam. Being a grandparent is all that it's cracked up to be.

### **Individual/Business Awards**

Springfield, we are a great team. A team made up of outstanding players. As with all teams some players work extra hard, and their presence at every game makes all the difference. Each one is inspirational.

With that in mind, I want to take this opportunity to announce this year's Mayor's **Spirit of Springfield Award winner**. Please join me in welcoming to the stage the 2013 Spirit of Springfield Award winner, Gloria Griffith.

Gloria – I want to present this award to you for exemplifying just that kind of contribution.

You are someone who is familiar to so many, has helped so many with kindness and grace, and someone who has never looked for any recognition. You truly exemplify the Spirit of Springfield award. Year after year you have devoted yourself to ensuring that our children and families are cared for as only you can do. I call you earth mother, because you always look outside yourself, never judging, always welcoming, always have food available, great coffee and you bring out the best in everyone. Thank you and congratulations.

Just as there are individuals that have worked quietly on behalf of Springfield, so have many of our outstanding businesses – and there are many. It is always hard to choose which business to honor. But, a choice has to be made. So, in keeping with this year's theme I wanted to highlight businesses that have been inspiring for their decisions to locate in Springfield, for sticking it out in downtown Springfield, and for contributing to the growth and prosperity of Springfield as a whole.

The first **Mayor's Springfield Business** award goes to a business that not only chose to locate in Springfield, but chose to stay in downtown Springfield. This year I want to recognize D' Maria's Beauty Salon. Maria Prada, please join me at the podium.

Maria – You chose Springfield over any other place. Even when the odds would have said that it was a bleak proposition. Downtown, not many years ago, was an area that would have been considered a risky place to locate. It would have been easy to say this location was not worth it. Instead you not only stuck it out, you've made improvements to your storefront that has added to the appeal of Main Street. In addition, you have joined with other committed community members to share your time and ideas that are making downtown a destination for residents and visitors alike. Thank you for your faith in your business, your faith in downtown, and for volunteering to help make Springfield successful. Thank you and congratulations.

The second award goes to another downtown business, at the other end of downtown. What's at the other end of downtown? The Paramount Shopping Center and in the center is Café Madeira and Cedar Sage and Roses. Linda Pierce, please join me at the podium.

Linda, it is a pleasure to give you this award for your hard work helping to make the east end of downtown a destination shopping place. Over recent years the Paramount Center has transformed into a vibrant mix of shops and you have big a part of that transformation. Your energy and enthusiasm is contagious. In a recent Register Guard article you refer to hard work and determination, tonight I want to honor your hard work, commitment and being a Springfield girl at heart. Thank you and congratulations.

### **What's Ahead for Next Year**

What's ahead for next year? I can't in all honesty overlook the fact that the City still struggles as does the entire community to make ends meet. We are experiencing a new reality as a city and as a nation.

We will need to hone our skills to be competitive in our global economy. I have absolute faith that Springfield will rise to meet the challenge. We will need to be daring, we will need to be creative, and we will need to be willing to take some calculated risks. As Emerson once said **"Be bold about your actions, all life is an experiment."**

With that in mind, the Council has chosen to not only have broad reaching goals for the coming years, but has also chosen specific short-term strategies to improve our city.

True to our Springfield roots we are willing to jump in, eyes wide open, make decisions and move Springfield forward. At our recent goal setting we preliminarily chose such priorities as:

- a three year strategy to develop a signature project in Glenwood,
- a two year strategy to hold two cleanup days a year, and
- a one year goal to increase community outreach

Our community outreach will provide residents more ways to communicate with Council and more ways for Council to reach out to residents.

## **CONCLUSION**

With the accomplishments of the last year and the new goals and strategies of the Council, we look ahead to 2013. It is with a sense of excitement and enthusiasm that we start a new chapter of Springfield's story. No matter how hard the work, we are ready.

Every day in Springfield our citizens contribute to the success of our city. The challenge now is having the vision, the strength, and the determination to reach for our next set of goals.

To everyone in Springfield I encourage you to share in the vision and have the determination that we can obtain even greater successes when we all step up and help. Whether it is:

- joining a committee
- volunteering in your neighborhood
- supporting local businesses
- learning about our development plans for Glenwood and spreading the word about it
- or bringing your own new ideas to the table

Whatever you can do, wherever you can help, I ask you to join in with us as we move forward.

**Thomas Morton said – “The biggest temptation is to settle for too little.”**

Let's not settle for too little, Springfield. We are headed in the right direction. And, together **WE – CAN – DO – IT**